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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE CHILD-WELFARE PROBLEM IN THE NEW YORK HIGH SCHOOLS<sup>\*</sup>

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A committee of the High-School Teachers' Association of New York City was appointed in the spring of 1910 to prepare for the Child Welfare Exhibit, which was to have been held in the fall of the same year, a suitable presentation of the child-welfare problem from the high-school teacher's point of view. On account of the limited space and the shortness of the time available it was decided to concentrate the efforts of the committee upon a few points which might be expected to lead to practical results.

### I. THE NEED FOR HIGH-SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS

To illustrate the need for increased high-school accommodation in the city of New York, a comparison was made between the high-school register of this city and those of several other cities; and a map of Brooklyn, prepared by Mr. Kingsley two years ago for the Committee on High-School Accommodations of this association, showing the distribution of girls and boys attending high schools in relation to the location of the high-school buildings was exhibited. The average time and the total money spent in street-car travel by these pupils had been carefully calculated, and the figures placed under the map, and the regions in greatest need of new high schools (in all boroughs) indicated.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> The report of the Committee of the High-School Teachers' Association of New York City on the Child Welfare Exhibit: Benjamin C. Gruenberg, *chairman*; Clarence D. Kingsley, Ellen E. Garrigues, Henrietta Rodman, Eli W. Weaver, Alexander L. Pugh, Joseph K. Van Denburg. For various reasons the material prepared by the committee was not used at the Child Welfare Exhibit. A set of charts presenting most of this material was prepared with the assistance of pupils in the drawing classes of one of the high schools, and these were exhibited at the annual meeting of the association, May 4, 1911. The Report will be printed in the *Yearbook* of the association.

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Kingsley's report in the *Yearbook* for 1908.

TABLE I

HIGH-SCHOOL REGISTER (1909) PER 1,000 OF POPULATION (1910)

Milwaukee.....	9.0	Boston.....	12.5
Providence }		Los Angeles.....	13.6
Cleveland }	9.6	Washington.....	14.5
Buffalo.....	10.3	New Haven.....	15.3
Detroit.....	11.1	Seattle.....	16.6
Louisville.....	11.6	Minneapolis }	
Saint Paul.....	11.8	Denver }	18.5
Indianapolis.....	12.3	Kansas City }	
		New York.....	7.7

To provide for its children the same high-school accommodations as are given by Minneapolis, Denver, and Kansas City, New York would need 78 high schools instead of 20.

We need more schools. We need smaller schools.

## 2. THE NEED FOR VOCATIONAL DIRECTION

On the basis of statistics gathered by Dr. J. K. Van Denburg,<sup>3</sup> there was prepared a chart showing, in percentages, (a) the occupations of the parents of high-school pupils (classified according to the United States Census schedules used in 1900; (b) the occupations of the adult population of the city of New York, according to the 1900 Census; and (c) the occupations for which the high-school pupils intended or hoped to prepare themselves.

A comparison of these figures brought out strikingly the conclusions that certain classes of the population do not make the same use of the high schools as do other classes, either because they cannot afford to keep the children in school so long, or because the schools do not offer what they consider worth while for their children; and that the aspirations of high-school pupils are directed toward certain callings out of all proportions to society's needs for services in those callings, while interest in other callings is destroyed, and preparation for these neglected.

As a result of Mr. Weaver's studies in vocational guidance, he has had prepared a chart showing a plan for organizing vocational direction in connection with the high schools.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This material is to be published separately under the title, "A Study of Elimination in New York City High Schools" (Teachers College).

<sup>4</sup> See Mr. Weaver's report for the Students' Aid Committee, in the *Yearbook* for 1911.

## 3. THE NEED FOR MODIFIED COURSES

The need for different types of instruction in high schools may be inferred from Dr. Van Denburg's investigations, and is further emphasized by the apparently aimless drifting of our high-school population.

TABLE II

## THE DRIFT OF THE HIGH-SCHOOL PUPIL

Two-thirds of our elementary-school graduates enter high schools.

In 1910 these amounted to 23,202.

Ninety per cent of those who enter never complete the course.

Two-thirds of those who enter complete less than one year of the course.

Fifty-five per cent of those who enter come with the hope of completing the course.

Less than 10 per cent do complete it.

Every year 30 per cent of our high-school pupils are discharged.

Every year we discharge enough pupils to fill eight good-sized high schools.

There is urgent need for special short courses for those who can stay but a short time.<sup>5</sup>

## 4. THE PHYSICAL WELFARE OF HIGH-SCHOOL PUPILS

On the subject of the physical welfare of high-school pupils, there were prepared three charts: (a) on the school luncheon; (b) on gymnasiums and bathing; and (c) on medical inspection. In the preparation of these considerable assistance was rendered by Dr. Louis I. Dublin, of the Biology Department of the Commercial High School.

TABLE III

## LUNCHES

In all but five of the high schools lunches may be purchased by the pupils within the building.

In all but four suitable rooms are provided.

In seven of the high schools supervision of lunchrooms includes control over the character of the food and the prices.

In one high school<sup>6</sup> the whole equipment and management are completely in the hands of the faculty.

<sup>5</sup> A two-year vocational course has already been introduced into the Chicago high schools. The High School of Commerce (New York) is planning to introduce a special short course for pupils who intend to stay but a short time.

<sup>6</sup> Commercial High School, Brooklyn.

In one high school<sup>7</sup> the whole equipment and management are completely in the hands of the general organization.

All high schools give instruction on the subject of proper luncheon.

Not all provide opportunity for selecting proper luncheons.

TABLE IV  
PHYSICAL WELFARE

Most of our high schools have no bathing facilities in connection with the gymnasium equipment.

In only two high schools is bathing a regular part of the gymnasium exercises.

In eight high schools bathing is encouraged in connection with after-school activities.

Swimming is taught in only one of the high schools.

In every high school regular gymnasium exercises come immediately after lunch for from three to twenty classes per week; although in every biology department the un wisdom of violent exercise after eating is systematically taught.<sup>8</sup>

With one exception all high schools give instruction in hygiene and sanitation for from two to ten weeks during the first year. This is generally supplemented by the physical training teachers.

TABLE V  
MEDICAL INSPECTION

What the Medical Inspector Does in Nine Schools	What He Might Do
1. Signs name in book.	1. Examine pupils taken sick during school hours.
2. Leaves building.	2. Examine backward pupils for remediable defects that cause retardation.
	3. Examine pupils who are frequently absent.
	4. Co-operate with principals and teachers to raise health standard of schools by
	a) Occasional talks on health topics.
	b) Supervision of luncheons.
	c) Advice to individual pupils.

Best results are obtained where a physician is a member of the teaching staff either in the Department of Biology or of Physical Training.

<sup>7</sup> Manual Training High School, Brooklyn.

<sup>8</sup> Since February 1, 1911, one of the largest high schools has arranged its program so as to have none of the gymnasium work fall immediately after lunch.

## 5. A SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SOME HIGH-SCHOOL NEEDS

It was decided to present in one chart a number of brief statements as to high-school needs, in the expectation that they would be accepted as obvious, or be challenged and thus lead to profitable discussion of important problems.

TABLE VI  
SOME HIGH-SCHOOL NEEDS

Guidance of pupils in choice of vocation; in selection of studies; in learning to use the school and other institutions.

Co-operation with parents and with other city departments.

Differentiated opportunities.

Short courses in practical work and inspiration for short-term pupils.

A change in the child-labor law that will require more than perfunctory attendance as evidence of satisfactory scholastic attainments.

Simpler courses of study: more flexible courses: so that pupils may concentrate on a few subjects; so that teachers may know students better; so that thoroughness and economy may replace superficiality and wasted effort.

Smaller classes: more teachers. More than half of the high-school teachers have to know over 150 pupils each term.

Personal influence is dissipated; there is no time to think; teachers become mechanical; mechanical teachers are not economical.

More high schools: smaller high schools.